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Abstract

KNOWN AND ESTIMATED URANIUM RESERVES IN ARGENTINA

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On the basis of the geological structure of Argentina and of modern concepts of uranium-bearing deposit formation, it is estimated that over 1 million km^2 of the continental territory of the country may contain varying accumulations of uranium minerals. Of this area, about 400 000 km^2 are especially promising, in view of the types and locations of the geological formations present. It is here that both State and private prospecting and exploration have been concentrated.

So far, regular prospecting, especially by air, has covered more than 75 000 km^2, in which over 150 localities have been found with deposits of varying uranium content, in some cases still to be determined.

Exploration and assay work has been carried out on a very small number of deposits, in keeping with budget allocations and national nuclear requirements.

The uranium-bearing areas of the country contain three main types of deposit: (a) sedimentary; (b) vein-type; and (c) pegmatitic. The first of these contains the largest concentrations; the vein-type deposits constitute only a small part of the whole and those contained in pegmatites are, with a few exceptions, of no economic importance.

The paper briefly describes the main features of the principal areas or deposits (Tonco-Amblayo, Tinogasta, Guandacol-Jáchal, Sañogasta, San Roque, Huaco, San Isidro, Malargüe, Comechingones, Valle de Punilla, Chihuidos, Rahueco, Sierra Cuadrada, Paso de Indios, Río Chico and pegmatites in the Sierras Pampeanas) and indicates the volumes of the reserves measured so far and the estimated uranium content in each case, the volumes measured being classified according to the production costs of commercial-grade concentrates (greater or less than US $8/lb).

It also contains a table showing the uranium minerals so far identified in Argentina and a tentative classification of the deposits by type of formation.